

March 6, 2023
Education Committee

HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food for Schools Incentive Program and Expansion of The CT Grown for CT Kids Grants Program

Dear Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, and Connecticut General Assembly members of the Education Committee,

My name is Laura Jackson and I am the Director of Outreach for the Yellow Farmhouse Education Center, a nonprofit organization in Stonington. Our mission is to connect people to each other and to where their food comes from through food and farm-based education.

I am writing in support of HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food for Schools Incentive Program and Expansion of The CT Grown for CT Kids Grants Program.

The Yellow Farmhouse was fortunate to receive a CT Grown for CT Kids grant in 2022 to make a more direct connection between agriculture and culinary education in Connecticut. With these funds, we've facilitated monthly workshops for Family & Consumer Science teachers that feature Connecticut farms, farmers, and food producers. Supporting FCS teachers to learn about local agriculture empowers them to share this knowledge with their students.

Yet many teachers find it challenging to purchase local food because of restrictive purchasing policies in their districts and the higher cost. We estimate that FCS teachers in CT spend \$1.75 million per year on food for their culinary classrooms. HB 6842 would mean that more of that money would be poured back into our state and our agricultural sector.

Culinary classrooms are a logical place to feature local produce, so that young people learning to cook also learn what crops are grown in each season in Connecticut. Many of these students will go on to careers in hospitality or the restaurant industry and will take with them knowledge of our state's agricultural offerings and the crops that give our region its unique flavor.

I humbly ask you to fund this program, which will support local farms and make local food more accessible to young people. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our state.

Laura Jackson

